



Canberra Institute
of Technology

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Submission to Review of Australian Higher Education

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Introduction

The Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) is the ACT and region's leading training organisation. It is the ACT's largest publicly owned education institution with RTO status, and provides 80 per cent of publicly funded vocational education and training in the ACT.

CIT has been a statutory authority for almost twenty years, and in 2008 celebrates eighty years of vocational training provision in the ACT.

In 2007, CIT delivered 5.4 million hours of training, had 30,527 student enrolments and produced some 3,200 skilled graduates.

CIT delivers more than 450 programs on five campuses, producing graduates across 18 industry groups. In 2007, 41.3 per cent of CIT qualifications were at Certificate IV level and above within the Australian Qualifications Framework, compared with the national average of 21.3 per cent.

CIT also has been offering higher education programs for the past thirteen years. Current higher education programs are:

- Engineering - ANU Associate Degree
- Bachelor of Design (Fashion Design)
- Bachelor of Applied Science (Forensic Investigation)
- Music – ANU Associate Degree
- Bachelor of Design (Photography)
- Science – ANU Associate Degree.

These programs:

- meet the needs of the ACT and region community and business for highly skilled individuals in targeted industries;
- provide higher education in program areas not offered by other higher education providers in the region; and
- provide alternative learning pathways for students.

As well, CIT has strong articulation arrangements in place with several universities and has arguably a national best practice collaborative partnership with the University of

Canberra. Success from this partnership arises “not only from the alignment of governance, process and infrastructure support but also from a shared focus on students.”¹

Overview

CIT believes that more formal recognition of the breadth of the tertiary sector is appropriate, particularly given the international context. Within the tertiary sector, the distinctive but overlapping roles of higher education and vocational education should be acknowledged, and greater recognition given to the distinct legitimacy of both. VET is critical in authentic work-relevant learning with a primary focus on direct employability skills, through its industry relevance and partnering. VET teachers display a sophisticated range of pedagogical approaches, with a particular strength in student centred, work centred, holistic learning.²

A greater proportion of students completing Year 12 will go, appropriately, to VET (often TAFE) than to university. Some will, as they mature, seek university pathways. Equally many with university or VET qualifications will come to TAFE for practical skill set training as their career develops. Such training may be delivered in the workplace or online.

CIT agrees with the view that there should be easy movement in and out of education and training at all levels throughout various stages of an individual’s life.

Responses to discussion questions

CIT wishes to respond specifically to section 3.4 of the Discussion Paper: *Connecting with other Education and Training Sectors*, with a particular focus on key issues for higher education provision through TAFE institutes.

15. To what extent should vocational education and training and higher education continue to have distinctive missions and how should these missions be defined?

The VET mission is a complex one: to build individual and workforce capacity and thereby contribute to increased productivity, by facilitating lifelong learning and by maximising engagement with learning by both job seekers and existing workers. The VET sector’s learners are diverse and display a wide range of needs, increasingly moving towards higher level qualifications. Higher skills are needed to meet the requirements of contemporary communities and workplaces.

¹ *What’s it like for students? Enhancing the student experience from VET to University* (B. Cram, V. Croucher, B. Lines - AVETRA Conference April 2008)

² *VET Teaching and Learning: the Future Now 2006-10*. Western Australian Government, Department of Education and Training, February 2006

Distinctive missions are appropriate, given the significant research role of universities, and the fact that VET includes areas of trade training (plumbing, panel beating, hairdressing) which are not associated in people's minds with a university education, but which nevertheless require complex learning and problem-solving foci. In the middle, however, at the levels of Diploma, Advanced Diploma and Bachelor Degree, there is considerable overlap which can offer a flexible and diverse range of choices and pathways for students. In meeting Australia's skill needs now and into the future, this type of diversity should be encouraged and fostered.

A core element in developing diversity with quality and responsive institutions is to acknowledge, support and expand the special role of TAFE institutes as higher education providers and through articulation arrangements with universities.

TAFE institutes in particular exemplify the integrated relationship between vocational education and training, and higher education.

TAFE higher education provision:

- i. is a natural extension of the special strengths of individual institutes and provides a continuum of vocational skill development opportunities;
- ii. supports the increasingly diverse population seeking tertiary education, and particularly provides increased access for disadvantaged groups;
- iii. meets the higher level skills demands of industry and the learning preferences of individual students;
- iv. is a cost effective means of maximising the value of TAFE resources, strengths and industry links.

16. Does the movement between the sectors of students with credit need to be improved? If so, in what ways?

Movement between the sectors should and can be improved through supporting stronger TAFE / university collaborative partnerships. Recommendations to achieve this are:

Incentives to university /TAFE partners for enhanced articulation and collaboration: At a minimum this could encourage the development of appropriate systems (to administer, record, promote and monitor credit transfer), policies, structures and processes to support effective credit transfer. It would also provide the opportunity to support broader collaboration. The Canberra Institute of Technology / University of Canberra *Beyond Articulation* project provides a model. Further details about the project are provided below, under Question 18 and in the attachments.

Incentives to HE institutes to increase the numbers of VET students granted credit:

Funding arrangements or special financial incentives may encourage universities to develop comprehensive, stable and consistent articulation arrangements with TAFE. Bilateral and multilateral arrangements would also be encouraged resulting in enhanced learning pathway choices for students.

Targeted funding for research on articulation: There is a continuing need to pursue a national and systemic approach to credit transfer arrangements. Elements of this have been widely canvassed, but are yet to be achieved, including a common conceptual framework and a common language for descriptors of VET and higher education qualifications. This can also work the other way. We should recognise and encourage more university to TAFE and joint program delivery, for example, the 2+1 degrees, where students complete two years of an Advanced Diploma at TAFE and then complete an additional year at university to gain a degree. The best examples of these models are jointly developed and recognise the strengths of both sectors.

17. To what extent should relative provision between the sectors be planned or demand driven? What are the effects of current differences on funding, governance and regulation in limiting planning or influencing choice between the sectors?

Demand is by definition reactive so provision should be determined using a balance of demand and planning, with planning being at least as significant a factor as demand. This view is premised on the assumption that appropriate research is available to inform the planning process.

The current arrangements restrict TAFE in the extent to which it can meet equity needs and participate in applied research. Suggestions to address this are:

Support TAFE higher education provision through targeted funding

Commonwealth funded degree places in TAFE: Supporting and widening access to applied degrees in TAFE could be achieved through providing Commonwealth funded degree places in TAFE. There is a strong case on equity grounds for such support given TAFE's higher proportion of students drawn from disadvantaged groups.

TAFE access to research funding: The quality and responsiveness of TAFE applied degrees could be enhanced through access to competitive research grants to support scholarship. Opportunities exist for applied research activity through TAFE and industry collaboration and also with universities. Access to Commonwealth research funds would acknowledge the existing role provided by TAFE institutes in supporting research and innovation through training technical and para-professional personnel engaged in research and development in industry. New Zealand's multi-sector approach to

research provides access for New Zealand's Polytechnics to research funding through the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (all education sectors) and the Tertiary Education Commission's Research Funds program (tertiary education sector). This multi-sector approach is designed to focus on outcomes for learners, to grow research capability and capacity, to enhance links across sectors and to enhance transference of research to practice.

Access to FEE-HELP and VET FEE-HELP

CIT welcomes the current developments in this area.

Access to Capital and Equipment Funding

While CIT acknowledges the ability of the VET sector to access funding under the new \$11 billion Education Investment Fund, no funding will be provided in the current financial year, and no details are available about how funding will be allocated. The provision of higher-level vocational education and training skills is a key plank of the Australian Government's approach to fighting inflation. This requires contemporary infrastructure and means of delivery: buildings, equipment, IT systems, support services and teaching resources. VET providers must have up-to-date facilities in order to provide industry-relevant training and increase the productivity of the workforce, now and into the future.

18. Can institutions provide examples of good practices which have led to movement between the sectors with high levels of credit and good learning outcomes?

CIT and the University of Canberra have demonstrated an enduring and highly successful collaborative partnership through implementing a coordinated and systemic approach to cross-sectoral collaboration.

The extent of this successful collaboration is wide-ranging and includes:

- a) Improving choice and opportunities for articulating students.
- b) Enhancing student knowledge about pathways.
- c) Improving teaching and learning arrangements, particularly around key cross-sectional issues in curriculum design and assessment.
- d) Increasing joint professional development opportunities.
- e) Implementing sustainable systems in both institutions to improve program quality and student opportunities involving evaluation, policy and planning, and monitoring.
- f) Investigating ACT economies of scale in resourcing the infrastructure of both institutions.
- g) Fostering innovation in structural reform particularly through collaborative partnering of projects related to admissions, assessment, reporting and credit transfer.

- h) Providing a model of successful cross-sectoral collaboration to contribute to broader systemic change within Australian tertiary education.

This collaboration has been supported by a grant from the Australian Government's Collaboration and Structural Reform (CASR) Fund. At the time of application in 2005 this was the only CASR grant for TAFE – University cross-sectoral collaboration.

The project has provided multiple outcomes and benefits for each of the nine objectives identified for the project. Some direct outcomes and benefits already in place include:

- o Mutual staff placement policies enabling skills, knowledge and capability exchange. Senior IT staff have participated.
- o *Student Opportunities, Choices and Pathways* website providing easy access to information about the 170+ articulation arrangements.
www.canberra.edu.au/cit-pathways
- o Annual reviews of credit transfer arrangements resulting in improved levels of credit for some existing arrangements and approval of additional credit transfer arrangements.
- o Reciprocal library borrowing and access arrangements.
- o Joint seminars on mobile and online learning.
- o Dedicated orientation sessions for articulating CIT students
- o Shared teaching in Allied Health and Design.
- o Resource sharing (e.g. laboratories) in Health Sciences, Forensics, Sport, Design and Landscape Architecture.
- o Collaborative project in Forensic Science to enable sharing of teaching, learning resources, facilities and expertise to meet national needs,
- o Collaborative project in Physiotherapy and Health Assistants to develop an integrated teaching approach to meet regional needs.
- o Research into articulating student experience, enrolment and credit transfer patterns.
- o Carrick Institute citation for enhancing student learning by supporting articulation pathways between University of Canberra and Canberra Institute of Technology.
- o UC development of an in-house articulation database.
- o UC streamlined enrolment procedure providing automatic credit for CIT students following articulation pathways.
- o Regular meetings of educational developers from both institutions.
- o Agreement for mutual access to Student Association activities in both institutions.
- o Production of collaborative marketing materials on post-secondary pathways for ACT secondary college students.

- o Publication of a *Beyond Articulation* newsletter for internal distribution.

The project has also facilitated an increase in the number of articulation arrangements (from approximately 130 in 2006 to over 170 in 2008), enabling students in 75 different CIT programs to articulate in 37 UC undergraduate programs with credit granted automatically at enrolment.

Attachments

These reports outline key enablers emanating from the *Beyond Articulation* project.

1. Managing Credit Transfer from TAFE to University: the case for cross-sectoral collaboration (B. Cram and L. Watson – AVETRA Conference April 2008)
2. What's it like for students? Enhancing the student experience from VET to University (B. Cram, V.Croucher, B. Lines - AVETRA Conference April 2008)